KEDARMINSTER-Stuff.

A new PIECE of Print:

OR, A

REMNANT

OF

Mr. BAXTER's *PIÆ FRAUDES* UNRAVELLED.

BEING

AN APPENDIX

TO

Nonconformists Plea for Peace IMPLEADED.

By *J. B. Worcestershire.* = Brown, John

If I should zealously press my Judgment on others, and seek to make a Party for it, and disturb the Peace of the Church, and separate from my Brethren, I should fear lest I should prove a Fire-brand in Hell for being such a Fire-brand in the Church. I charge you therefore, if God should give me up to any factious Church-rending course, that you forsake me, and follow me not a step. See *Baxter's Saints Rest*, Epist. Dedic. to the People of *Kedarminster*, p. 8, 9.

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A REMNANT OF Mr. BAXTER'S *PIÆ FRAUDES* UNRAVELLED.

SECT. I.

Mr. Baxter's *Title-page.*

THere's a Book of late extant called [*Nonconformists Plea for Peace:*] 'Tis called a [*Plea*] though it be indeed meer Magisterial dictating above what any Metropolitan would arrogate or pretend to; and is apparently more like a Plot than a Plea, meerly to disturb the Churches Peace, and embroil the Nation.

'Tis called a Plea for [*Peace*], though it be indeed for Schism; and no more a Plea for Peace, than the Author's fighting against the King was a making Peace with him. See who will, how well 'tis fitted to alienate the minds of Ministers and People, to seduce the Weak, and to confirm the Factious, to exasperate Governours, and possess the minds of men with hateful and rebellious thoughts against their Government, to disturb the Peace of Church and State, and to lay the Grounds of a lasting Separation; and he shall find that 'tis more likely to set three King-

doms in a Flame, than to settle Peace in one; it being certain that such Paper-lights as these Pleas for Peace, did help to inflame the Kingdom with the late Civil War: 'Tis well known they were such Outcries against Bishops and Ceremonies, that first brought in plea the Kings Prerogative; 'twas pretence to Reformation and the purity of Religion, to tenderness of Conscience and the power of Godliness, that brought men first to unjust Sequestering and wresting away Estates, then to plundering and cutting of Throats, and at last to the banishment and murder of Princes: In a word, to that which in times of the late Usurpation robb'd us of our Laws, Government, and Peace, tore and worried our Church and State, making it a prey to Tyranny and Sacriledge, which stain'd the Protestant Religion with Royal Bloudshed, and cover'd Fields with the Carcasses of many thousand Christians. I say, that which did this, was pretence to Reformation and purity of Religion, the Bloud-thirsty Zeal of those Puritans who (as Bishop *Bancroft* foretold) would never give over their Cry for Reformation, till they had ruined us Church and State; and whatever specious titles and pretences this *Plea for Peace* may have, 'tis certain its duct and tendency is no better: what's most material in it, hath had its disquisition by the judicious Impleader. I have now to do but with some of the Rubbish and Impertinencies of it, which that worthy Author has past by as less worthy of his notice.

SECT. II.

Of their Separate Congregations.

THE Pleader begins with Churches. His first undertaking is to shew what Churches are of Divine Institution, and what not; where he endeavours, by dark Definition and nice Division, to make the Church like the Multitude, many Heads, the forking it into Dichotomies meerly to amuse the people, representing to them the Notion of a Church as some unintelligible

telligible thing, to make their Schism the harder to be discerned. He tells us, *p.* 8. *He doubts not but that a Society of Neighbour-Christians associated with a Pastor for personal Communion in Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship,* (such as their Meetings are) *is of Divine Institution.* His 16th and 17th Sections are to the same purpose: which I have found his Followers to take for proof, that their Congregations are true Churches, and of Divine Institution. But I doubt not there are thousands of good Christians in *England*, that will as soon believe these Assemblers Heads to be truly Steeples, as those Assemblies to be true Churches, especially as now managed.

1. To the great contempt of those more publick Assemblies that have the stamp of Authority both from God and man, and which are of that which is the onely Church National that ever was reformed from Popery by a Law, and not out of Huddles and Tumults, as *Geneva* and most of the Reformed Churches beyond Sea were; which Reformed Church or Churches in *England*, as the first Reformers planted with their Sweat, so their Successours watered with their Bloud, and particularly those Martyrs *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, and others, that were the first Compilers of the Common-prayer.

2. Their Antichurches are kept up to the begetting of those Schisms and Divisions, which the best of Christians in Primitive times have accounted as bad as Heresie; as *Chrysost. Epist. ad Eph. Edit. secund.* p. 823. τῦ εἰς αἵρεσιν ἐμπεσεῖν τὸ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν σχίσαι ἐκ ἐλαττόν ἐστι κακὸν, *To divide the Church* (says he) *is no less evil* [*or sinful*] *than to fall into Heresie.* And *Aug. Ep. contra Parmen. l.* 2. 2. *Vix crimen aliquod*, &c. *There is scarce any thing so bad as Schism; not Idolatry*, said *Dyonis. ap. Euseb. l.* 6. *Not Sacriledge*, said *Optatus*, *l.* 1. *'Tis* ἀρχὴ κακῶν, *the original of Evils*, said *Ignatius*, *Ep. ad Smyr.* Mr. *Baxter* says (*Plea*, p. 3.) *Indeed could they find out the Schismatick, he hopes he would be condemned of all.* But what Quaker, Papist, or Schismatick whoever could not say as much? *And if they knew indeed what Schism is* (says he, *p.* 3.) *they would avoid it.* As though all those most learned and best of men in their Ages, *Ignatius*, *Cyprian*,

prian, Auguſtine, and others that wrote ſo much againſt Schiſm, knew not what Schiſm is, but wrote againſt they knew not what; or as though ſo great a Polygraphus as Mr. *Baxter*, after ſo many years dabling in their Writings, could not find out the definition of Schiſm. But,

3. God never inſtituted Churches to be kept up in diſobedience to thoſe Chriſtian Magiſtrates which he commands us to obey upon pain of damnation, *i. e.* eternal damnation, as Mr. *Baxter* expounds it, *H. Commonwealth*, p. 352. telling us further, *Theſ.* 319. *That diſobedience to our Rulers, is in Miniſters* (ſays he) *double treaſon and wickedneſs.*

4. In his ſame *H. Commonwealth, Theſ.* 240. he teacheth, *That 'tis neceſſary to the Churches peace, that no private Congregations may be gathered, or Antichurches erected, without approbation and toleration from the Magiſtrate.* [Where he means plain enough, all Congregations ſeparate or diſtinct from the Pariſh-Churches, as theirs now are.] Adding in the ſame page, *That if private Aſſemblies be permitted unlimitedly, then* 1. *it will be impoſſible to reſtrain Hereſie, Infidelity, or Impiety; yea,* 2. *they may meet* (ſaith Mr. *Baxter*) *to plot againſt the Magiſtrate: And no Aſſemblies whatever*, ſays he, [meaning beſide thoſe of the Pariſh-Church] *are to be allowed by the Magiſtrate.* Again, *Theſ.* 263. (ſaith he) *If Magiſtrates forbid Miniſters to preach or exerciſe the reſt of their Office in their Dominions, they are to be obeyed.* For which he inſtances in *David, Solomon*, and other Kings taking down and ſetting up Prieſts, and ordering the Officers of the Houſe of God. And what he ſays in his *Plea*, p. 218. [*That where there is no neceſſity of their preaching, Nonconformiſts ſhould forbear it,*] condemns the practice of moſt Nonconformiſts in *England.*

5. 'Tis a little regardable, that many of theſe Antichurches are kept up by thoſe very perſons who blew the Trumpets of Rebellion in XLIII, and were the moſt active Pulpiteers in ſetting forward the late Civil War, and after that the Regicide; which will be made evident in the ninth Section following: And that theſe Meetings are all kept up by thoſe who look upon them-

themſelves as bound by Oath (the *Solemn League and Covenant*) to endeavour all the days of their lives the extirpation of Church-government by Biſhops, Deans, *&c.* i.e. to endeavour the Overthrow of that Government in the Church which is by Law eſtabliſht; and ſo to act over again the Tragedies of Civil War, when opportunity and power ſhall give them leave.

SECT. III.

Of Biſhops.

THe Pleader comes next to Biſhops, and tells us, *p.* 6. 13, 14, 15. *That in Scripture-times a Biſhop had but one fixed Society, one Church or worſhipping Aſſembly, under him; and that the greateſt defenders of Prelacy have affirmed, that Churches Provincial, Patriarchal, National,* &c. *are but of Humane Inſtitution. Anſw.* So have the greateſt defenders of Nonconformity affirmed Churches Congregational, Claſſical, and all others, as well as Dioceſan, Provincial, *&c.* to be of Humane Inſtitution onely. *The ordering of ſuch diſtinction of Churches, are left* (ſaith Mr. *Tombs, Theodul.* p. 21.) *to divine Providence and humane Prudence.* Among thoſe great defenders of Prelacy he mentions none but Dr. *Hammond*, and that moſt falſly and injuriouſly, thus: [*That though this Title* πρεσβύτερος *hath been extended to a ſecond Order in the Church, and is now onely in uſe for them under the name of* Presbyters, *yet in Scripture-time it belonged principally, if not onely, to Biſhops; there being no Evidence that any of that ſecond Order were then inſtituted, though ſoon after there were ſuch inſtituted in all Churches.*] From which words the Pleader infers two things: 1. That the Office of a Presbyter that was no Biſhop, was not in being in Scripture-times. 2. That no Biſhop had more than one worſhipping Aſſembly at once. To the firſt, *Anſw.* The Doctor in the next page renders this reaſon for it, *That while there was no multitude of Chri-*

Dr. Ham. *Annot. on* Acts 11.6. *whith Mr.* B. *miſtakes for* Acts 11. 30.

Christians, there were found none among them that were fit to be constituted Presbyters (in our use of the word;) and therefore contented themselves with a Bishop onely, and a Deacon or Deacons to assist him; there being (saith he) *then so small store out of which to take more, and so small need of ordaining more: Intimating that when the number of Christians encreased, and there was need of ordaining more, that Order should be set up in the Church*, as it was soon after. So that his first conclusion from the Doctor's words, is very falsly inferr'd.

The other thing that he infers from them is, That a Bishop had but one Church, or one Worshipping Assembly at once. *Answ.* Of which there is not one syllable in the Doctor's words; and how far it is from his meaning and opinion, will appear to any that will but turn over his *Annotations* to the page preliminary to *Titus*; where, from *Eusebius*, he affirms *Titus* to have been Bishop of the Churches of *Crete*; and from St. *Chrysostom*, that *Titus* had committed to him ὁλόκληρον τὸν λαὸν, an intire Island. So his *Annotations* on *Tim.* 1. 3. 15. and other places, shew how grosly he miscites the Doctor, and how falsly he asserts from him, That Episcopal Churches in Scripture-times were but single Congregations. And 'tis strange that Mr. *Baxter* should say that he knows no proof ever produced of Gods instituting Churches Provincial, Patriarchal, *&c.* since he himself hath produced such full and solid proof of it, and that but lately, as in his *Christian Directions*, part 7. p. 127. And N. 4. having proved the particular Orders of Presbyters and Deacons, he tells us, *That besides those in the universal Church in the Apostles days, there were many general Officers under Christ, that had the care of governing and overseeing Churches up and down, and were fixed by stated Relation to none.* Which shews, that beside the fixed Pastors and Deacons of every Church Congregational or Parochial, there was in the Apostles times a larger Episcopacy in Gods Church, and more general Officers and Overseers to preside and visit the Churches, like Colonels and chief Commanders in an Army, Officers different from the Captains and stated Officers of every single Company. Thus Mr. *Baxter*; and yet

now

now he never ſaw proof produced of Churches Provincial, Patriarchal, *&c.* divine inſtitution. It hath been proved *ex abundanti* by Biſhop *Hall* and others, particularly Dr. *Stillingfleet's* [*Unreaſonableneſs of Separation,*] that Epiſcopacy is founded on no other than Scripture, Reaſon, Apoſtolick practice, and Antiquity: To which I adde but this, That the Apoſtles and Diſciples were diſtinct Orders of Church-Officers, as is evident from that of *Judas's* forfeiting his Biſhoprick, and *Matthias* (according to the prediction of the Pſalm) taking it up; who being by lot declared to be his Succeſſour, was accordingly advanced from the lower Order of Diſcipleſhip to that higher one of being an Apoſtle. According to which the Ancients uſed to compare the Epiſcopal Office to that of the Apoſtles, and the Presbyters Office to that of the Seventy, as Officers employed by and under Biſhops.

And this name [*Apoſtle*] being at laſt thought too ſacred, as being fit onely for ſuch as had ſeen the Lord, and were (according to the import of the word) immediately ſent by him; therefore in the early times of Primitive Chriſtianity this name Apoſtle was laid aſide, and that of Biſhop uſed in its ſtead; implying the ſame duty and dignity, though not of perſon, yet of place, as that of Apoſtle: So that what the Apoſtles were in Chriſt's own time, that are Biſhops ever ſince; and what Rank the Seventy had in the Church in Chriſt's time, the ſame and no other our Miniſters have now.

As for that trite one, of the names of *Biſhop* and *Presbyter* being applied to the ſame perſons, it doth no more argue every Presbyter to be a Biſhop, than the King's being a Gentleman argues every Gentleman to be a King: For admit the names were uſed in common to both, yet where do we finde that the powers are exerciſed in common alſo? That the Presbyter as well as Biſhop, has χειροτονειν ἡ χειειν, the power of ordaining, inflicting Church-cenſures? *&c.* The Councils of *Nice* and *Antioch* expreſſing a manifeſt diſtinction between Biſhops and Presbyters, do declare the Diſciplinary proceedings of Church-cenſures to be under the Biſhops

Conc. Nic. c. 4. Conc. Ant. c. 6.

ſhops ordering, and not the Presbyters. But in this I am prevented by that late excellent Treatiſe [*The Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*;] onely let me obſerve Mr. *Baxter's* Argument againſt Epiſcopacy, *Plea*, p.17. Having worded it thus, *That Biſhops cannot morally beget the Species of Presbyters*; he argues, *If Eccleſiaſtical Generation imitate Natural, then Biſhops would beget but their like; men beget men, Phyſicians make Phyſicians, and ſo* (ſays he) *Biſhops may beget Biſhops. Anſw.* As though Biſhops ſhould be conſecrated in their Mothers womb, and Preſbyters be ordained ſuch before they were born; and as though they could not be Biſhops or Presbyters *jure divino*, unleſs they were born ſuch. This is (I think) the true import and force of his Argument; not much unlike to that of his Scotch-brother, who reading in *Geneſis* the Hiſtory of the Creation, concludes thus: *Here's not a word of Biſhops of all that God made, therefore Biſhops are not* Jure divino.

The unchurching of Tim. and Tit. p. 1, 2, 3.

Ejuſdem Farinæ is that of Brother *Prynn*, who concludes *Timothy* to be no Biſhop, 1. Becauſe St. *Paul* and St. *Luke*, who were acquainted with him, never called him Biſhop: 2. Becauſe he was St. *Paul's* Aſſociate and Fellow-traveller: 3. Becauſe St. *Paul* calls him a Miniſter of God: 4. Becauſe he was a young man. And I doubt not but Mr. *Baxter's* late Book againſt Epiſcopacy will appear altogether as futile and doubty, when it has had its due diſquiſition.

SECT. IV.

Mr. Baxter's *Character of Biſhops.*

FRom Arguments, the Pleader proceeds to down-right reviling and railing Accuſations, ſtiling the Biſhops [*Plea*, 2 *part*, *p.*153. 160.] *Proud Diotrephes's, and that it is the lordly, proud, and impatient ſpirits of the Paſtors of the Church, that are the great diſturbers and dividers of it*; maliciouſly hinting, 2 *Plea*, p. 174,

p. 174, 175. *That there are some of our Bishops that scarce believe that there is a God, or a Life to come.* And in his Book of Concord, *p.* 122. he calls them, *The Military Instruments of the Devil.*

Concerning the latter of these, I shall onely say to the Pleader as *Michael* said to the Devil, *The Lord rebuke thee*, Jude 9. though the Apostle in the foregoing verse calls them, *Filthy dreamers that despise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities*: he calls them, *Raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame*, v. 13. *murmurers and complainers, whose mouths speak swelling words*, v. 16. *even they who separate themselves*, v. 19. As to the former part of his Railery, 'tis strange that he should call Bishops proud *Diotrepheses*, since according to that charge of St. *John* against *Diotrephes*, which he alludes to, *Joh.* 9. none can be called such but they who refuse the Authority of Bishops, prating against them malicioully; which was that St. *John* blamed *Diotrephes* for, in his loving to have the preheminence. But who are more likely the proud *Diotrephes's*, they who teach and practise Obedience to their Rulers, according to Gods Word, or they who magisterially set up their own Domination, Judgment, and Will, as the Rule of Order, Unity, and Peace? [though in sinful opposition to their Rulers,] Princely prescribing to all Christian Churches the true and onely terms of Concord [as the Pleader in his *Plea's* and other Books hath done.] Who but a Pope or Scotch-*Archegus* could have dictated concerning the killing and deposing of Kings, as Mr. *Baxter* has done in his *H. Commonw. Thes.* 358. compared with 368. *If the King* (says he) *raise War against the Parliament upon their declaration of the dangers of the Commonwealth, in that case the people may not onely resist him* [i. e. *fight against and kill him if they can*] *but also* (saith he) *he ceases to be King.* Nay, let him strain the very Papal Tyranny to what pitch of Insolence and Imposition he pleases, there are Presbyterian Claims and Presidents will equal it. Witness that of their Brethren in *Scotland*, in and since King *James's* time, [whose Discipline they would have had in *England*;] they vindicated to

themselves and their Consistory a soveraign, universal, and independent power in all things spiritual: They had not onely the Directive, but Legislative Power also; and all temporal things *in ordine ad Spiritualia* came within the verge of their Scepter; all Soveraign power had onely the Executive power of doing as they commanded, and was bound to preserve by its Power and Arms, their sacred Priviledges and Soveraignty: Whatever Laws enacted by King and Parliament they conceived to be against the Laws of Christ, [*i. e.* Presbytery in chief] the Presbyterian Ministers had power to repeal, and to discharge the Subjects from obeying. They might decree Laws of their own, not onely contrary to, but destructive of the Laws of the Land. The King was bound to keep their Laws, and put them in execution; and if neither he nor his Council would do it, the Nobles and Commons, nay every individual person, was bound to do it, at their direction: as may be seen in *Presbytery displayed*, *A.* Bishop *Bromhall* and others. This is that Presbytery which was in *Scotland*, and which Nonconformists would have had in *England*. What's there in Episcopal Jurisdiction, to this Presbyterian Insolence? their power of citing before their Judicatory the King and his Family, of excommunicating him in case of non-appearance, their subjecting his earthly Scepter to theirs, which they called the *Scepter of Christ*; in a word, his being forc'd to do whatever these Presbyterian Ministers enjoyned, was that which King *James* had the smart experience of; and therefore in the Conference at *Hampton-Court*, p. 79. (saith the King) *A Scotish Presbytery as well agrees with Monarchy, as God and the Devil; then* Jack *and* Tom, *and* Will *and* Dick *shall meet, and at their pleasure censure me and my Council and all my Proceedings; then* Tom *shall stand up and say, It shall be thus;* Dick *shall reply and say, It shall be thus: And therefore* (says the King to Dr. *Reignolds*) *till you find I grow pussie and lazie, I pray you, good Doctor, let Presbytery alone; for if that be once up in* England, *I am sure it will keep me in breath.* The Patriarchal Presbyters among them were honoured and attended more like Kings or Princes, than Presbyters or Prelates.

In

In a word, such was the Domination and Lordly pride of the Nonconforming Brethren of *Scotland*, that 'tis certain no Bishop or Archbishop in *England*, *Scotland*, or *Ireland*, hath used more Authority, or Lorded it more arrogantly, than these Presbyterian pretenders to parity.

Consult who will Mr. *Baxter's* Writings, and he shall finde that *England* had never such an *Aristarchus*; the whole world had never such a Metropolitan, except the *Pope*, for Magisterial prescribing, insolent despising, and censuring even all the Christian Churches in the world, whose practices agree not with his capricious humour; is not he then a fit person to call the Bishops and Church-Governours lordly, impatient, and proud *Diotrepheses*? But 'tis no great marvel, upon this consideration, That were people brought to a due liking of Bishops, their beloved Separation could not be kept up: As *Contzen* the Jesuit observed in these words: *How easie is it* (said he) *to bring the Puritans of* England *into Order and Unity with other Protestants, were they but brought to a liking of Bishops?* And this railing against Bishops is that Seignior *Bellarini* advised, as one way for the best managing of the Popish Interest in *England*: *Let the Bishops* (said he) *be soundly aspersed, as factious on the one hand, as worldly and careless on the other; and that it were well if they were removed.*

His Directions for restoring of Popery, l. 2. c. 18.

His Letter to Father Young.

SECT. V.

Mr. Baxter's *Character of the Conforming Clergie.*

THE Pleader having had this wrathful and malicious fling at the Bishops, see how like Ministers of the Gospel he accosts the inferiour Clergy, calling them craftily, *Raw Youths; their preaching, a saying over a pedantick lifeless Speech; and out of the Pulpit, little differing in speech or life from Carnal World-*

Worldlings, or formal Hypocrites, 1 Plea, p. 87. *raw, cold, dry, ſcandalous Miniſters, injudicious Novices, worldly Formaliſts and Hypocrites*: p. 231. *He ſuppoſes ſome guilty of Hereſie, Uſurpation, Malignity, and Wickedneſs*: p. 105. *And the greater part of the Miniſters of* England *to procure the liberty of their Miniſtry by ſin, yea groſs deliberate ſin*: p. 116. *Ignorant Readers, unfit to be truſted with the care of Souls, for their unskilfulneſs, unſoundneſs, notorious ſloth and negligence, and great averſneſs to a holy life*, &c. Juſt as the old Nonconformiſts the Donatiſts reputed St. *Auſtin*, calling him a ſeducer, a deceiver of Souls, exclaiming againſt him publickly and privately, that he was a Wolf that ſhould be ſlain for the preſervation of the Flock; and all this becauſe that holy man kept and defended the Communion of the Church, which thoſe Schiſmaticks rejected. The like uſage had *Baſil* at *Neoceſarea*, and *Greg. Nazianzen* at *Conſtantinople*. And thus do the Papiſts at this day call all Hereticks beſide themſelves.

Poſſid. de vita Aug. cap. 9.

But what railing Quaker, what black-mouth'd Atheiſt or Schiſmatick whatever could ſay more? Yet this is *Nonconformiſts Plea for Peace*. The Pleader teaches [*Plea*, p. 33.] That Princes ought to preſerve peace and charity among the Churches, and hinder Preachers from uncharitable reviling each other: Is this ſuch reviling or no? In his Scripture-proof for *Infant Church-membership*, he teaches, *p.* 148. That ſharp reproaching of Miniſters is the common Character of all Schiſmatical Subverters of the Church: Is this ſharp reproaching of Miniſters or no? Who then are the Schiſmatical Subverters of the Church? He adds in the next words, They ſmite the Shepherds, that they might the eaſier ſcatter, [ſeparate, and divide the Sheep] who teach people to ſcatter, ſeparate, and divide: And to what elſe doth this ſmiting, ſlandering, and reviling tend? Who ſees not 'tis the Atheiſt's great endeavours to make the profeſſion of the Miniſtry it ſelf, the ground of its contempt; and the diſtinctive names of Miniſters, the very Appellatives of ſcorn? So that to call a man a Prieſt, is (with ſome) to degrade him

him below his Servant. Is it not ſad then that ſuch an old carping Miniſter as Mr. *Baxter*, ſhould ſo abet that rampant ſin of the times, which the *Leviathan*-ſinners ſo ſport in? Not to ſay what the Pleader's deſigne in it is, had any man a mind to make Schiſms in the Church, what better method could he uſe, than to viliſie the Teachers of it? None could make men Schiſmaticks by perſwading to Schiſm, ſo as people ſhould perceive it; it muſt be done eruptly, by vilifying their Teachers, and repreſenting them as ſuch that the people may or ought to ſeparate from. Suppoſe the Devil were incarnate and dwelt among us, I appeal to the Pleader, whether this would not be his main work and buſineſs, (*viz.*) to make the Miniſtry and preaching of the Goſpel ſucceſſleſs to the good of Souls, And I appeal to any but the Pleader, whether any thing can be deviſed conducing more thereto, than vilifying the Miniſters and Preachers of it, as the Pleader doth; and making them odious to the people all he can. What people, having any ſence of Religion or the fear of God, would not ſeparate from Miniſters of ſuch black Characters as the Pleader fixes on the Conforming Clergy? I ſhall end this with thoſe words of Mr. *Baxter* in 241 *Theſ.* of *H. Commonw. It is neceſſary* (ſaid he) *to the Churches peace, that no Paſtors or Chriſtians be ſuffered in Print or Speech to rail at one another, and uſe contentious or opprobrious words:---And that tolerated Churches be not ſuffered to caſt ſcorn upon the approved Churches, nor be over-buſie or publick in drawing away others to their mind.* He adds, *If men for foul words are bound to their behaviour, and women for ſcolding be put in the Gumble-ſtool; there's no reaſon men ſhould be ſuffered to rail on pretence of their opinions in Religion.* Thus Mr. *Baxter*: Yet he allows himſelf ſuch railing in his opinions of Religion, that no Mother *Celiers*, *Hobbes*, *White*, or *Whitebread*, would exceed. But this is juſt that which *Contzen* the Jeſuit adviſed in order to the promoting of Popery in *England*, to viliſie the Miniſters: *For* (ſaith he, *Cont.* l. 2. c. 18.) *he that ſhall read the Writings of* Lutherans *againſt* Calviniſts, *and* Calviniſts *againſt* Lutherans [much more of Nonconformiſts againſt Conformiſts] *will think*

he

he reads not the Invectives of men against men, but the Furies and Roarings of Devils against Devils: And hence in time (saith he) *the very Rulers themselves will take occasion to change their Religion.*

It was on this same account that *Ursin* gave *Flacius Illyricus* this Character, [*Pref. in Apol. Cat.*] *That he was one who for divers years, by his discrediting Worthy and Orthodox men, and by stirring up unnecessary contentions, was a troubler of divers Consciences and Churches all over* Germany. [As I wish Mr. *Baxter* be not all over *England.*]

SECT. VI.

Mr. Baxter's *Character of Nonconformists.*

BUT are there none of this black Character among Nonconformists? are no raw, cold, injudicious Novices, *&c.* among them? No, they are hinted to be *clear, serious, holy, diligent Preachers*, Plea, 1. p. 87. *Judicious, convincing, affectionate Ministers*, p. 231. And in his second *Plea* 'tis *totidem verbis*, *Under all the Heavens of God, there's no one party of Ministers or People more able, holy, wise, and faithful, than those that are now silenced, and reproached as Puritans in his Majesties Dominions; and that they are the glory of the Churches, and of the King and Kingdom, and such as no Prince in the world is equally blest with.*

Thus, like the people of *China*, they fancy themselves to have two eyes, and almost all the world beside to be blind. But,

1. This uncharitable boast doth ill become such holy, judicious, *&c.*

2. This is no more than what the *Pharisees* of old, the *Anabaptists* and *Quakers* of late have opinioned of themselves: The Order of Jesuits in the Church of *Rome*, have stiled themselves the *Saintly Brotherhood*; and 'tis certain that many Quakers excel them in their affected Gravity, many Anabaptists in Piety,

the

the Prelates in Learning and preaching, and ſome Jeſuits in all four. But,

3. Who will regard this Thraſoniſm, this boaſting humour, ſince 'tis that which the Holy Ghoſt hath ſo plainly foretold and condemn'd, *That in the latter days perilous times ſhould come, when men ſhould be lovers of themſelves, boaſters, proud, falſe accuſers, fierce, deſpiſers of them that are good*, traytors, *heady, high-minded.----From ſuch turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 2.

4. As for their Character of Holineſs he gives them, obſerve who will their Carriage and Converſation, and he ſhall find but few things in them excelling Conformiſts, except their looking diſdainfully, walking and talking demurely, as thoſe of their predeceſſors in the 23 *Mat.* 14. 9 *Mat.* 11. 26 *Act.* 5. boaſting and conceiting of themſelves above others; avoiding the company of ſuch as they think worſe than themſelves; of being of the ſtricteſt Sect or profeſſion in Religion; their ſtraining at a Gnat, as the Pleader doth about *Chriſtmas*-day, when ſuch camels as Perjury, Sacriledge, and Diſobedience to Magiſtrates, will down well enough; their ſtarcht Converſation, ſupercilious and contemptuous Carriage towards all that are not of their Opinion in Religion, inſomuch that one that never ſaw their faces before, may diſcern them, for the moſt part, from any ſort of people in *England*, except Quakers onely.

5. As for the commendation he gives of their Ability [or Learning] however they now arrogate the reputation of it, it is not long ſince Learning was judged by ſome of them to unqualifie men for approbation to the Miniſtry; Parts and Abilities were reputed Qualities no way Miniſterial: While Friends and Faction, well-meaning and little underſtanding, have been Accompliſhments beyond Study and Univerſity; when humane Learning (as one obſerves) hath been ſcoft at as vain Philoſophy, and the enticing words of man: and under the notion of the fooliſhneſs of preaching, the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, *&c.* Ignorance hath got the ſtamp of *Jus Divinum*, and natural Weakneſs has paſt for ſupernatural Grace. But,

6. There's none queſtions the Pleaders abilities; he's able to

divide the Church into *Species ſemper diviſibiles*, into nothing, and (as a Nonconformiſt ſaid of him) to diſtinguiſh himſelf into a Fart. How many Nonconformiſts in *England* beſide himſelf, could in the twenty years ſtudy he ſpeaks of, finde out ſo many feeble Exceptions as he hath done, whereby to amuſe and enſnare the Rabble in the opinion of the ſinfulneſs of Conformity? And there are among them (no doubt) men of great Learning and Abilities, as he ſays; but allowing for the diſproportion of number between them and Conformiſts, and 'tis certain there will be found among them more *Groſſum-caputs* by far, than the Church of *England* will own. I know one of them that (becauſe he was generally reputed one of the ableſt) I ſhall here make this mention of: In a conſiderable Company diſputing with his Pariſh-Miniſter fiercely againſt Ceremonies, and particularly kneeling, being ſufficiently baffled, roſe from his ſeat, and with eyes and hands lift up, gave God thanks that he was none of the Diſputers of this world; which was judged by his Party a ſufficient Confutation of the Adverſary, and Denomination of an *able* man: And taking their Abilities by ſuch meaſures as theſe, they are all acknowledged (as the Pleader calls them) *able* men. But admit they were indeed men of better learning, preaching, and living, (as they are not;) 'tis certain, no Hereſie or Schiſm in the Church, no Sedition or Rebellion in the State, could be carried on but by ſuch men, who by a demure converſation and tolerable parts, are able to inflame the people with unreaſonable Zeal, to ſanctifie politick Villany, and put a varniſh of Religion on the blackeſt deſignes. Schiſmaticks had always this to ſay for themſelves; The Donatiſts and Novatians were purer than others, and therefore ſeparated from the ordinary Chriſtian Aſſemblies; *Arrius*, who denied the Divinity of Chriſt, was looked upon as a man of good learning and life: but were theſe men ever the leſs Schiſmaticks for their great Learning and plauſible Converſations? no, but much worſe.

As for their Preaching he ſo commends, there are no doubt many among them of great Dexterity and Skill, otherwiſe how could

could they keep up their Separation? But 1. Are there not such among Conformists? 2. Are there not many of the Nonconformists much followed, who have nothing whereon to fix that Character but twang and tautology, noise, hum and haw, schreeching and bawling like *Baal*'s Priests, as though God were no neerer them than the visible Heavens? And here let not the Pleader think that I speak of all of them, or that I undervalue, much less deride serious and affectionate preaching; for I have as great a veneration for it as himself: and were there a real distinction between affectionate preaching, which Nonconformists so affect, and rational convincing preaching, which Conformists so excel in, I had rather hear one Sermon of the former kind, than two of the latter.

As for his stiling Nonconformists *the glory of the Churches, of the King and Kingdom, and such Ministers as no Prince in the world is equally blest with*; I say but this: Then they are much mended, since it was used to be disputed, whether the Jesuits or Puritans were like to prove more pernicious and dangerous to the Commonwealth, where both or either of them lived. *Vid. Watson*'s *Quodlibet*, 2 Art. 1. And since the Lord Keeper *Puckering* proposed the same thing to the Parliament, delivering to them Queen *Elizabeth*'s Command, *That they hearken not to the sollicitations of those called Puritans, who* (said she) *do nothing but disturb the Peace and good Repose of Church and Commonwealth.* And concerning the same persons, Dr. *John Burgess* in his *Rejoynder*, p. 629. observes, *That as under the Name of Christ, and pretence of advancing his Kingdom, Antichrist was set up: so under the name of Antichrist, and pretence of onely opposing him, the Kingdom of Christ may be pulled down, and in part already is* (says he) *and men scarcely feel or fear it.* And 'tis observed out of Bishop *Bancroft*, that he long since foretold, *That the Puritans would never give over their clamour for Reformation, till they had utterly ruined the whole Kingdom and Church, if they were not timely suppress'd*: Adding that of *Livy*, *Urgentibus Rempubl. fatis, Dei & hominum salutares admonitiones spernuntur.*

The Apol. for Bishops voting in Parliament, p. 73.

nuntur. And though the Nonconformists are (as I really believe) irreconcilable haters of Popery, yet if Bishop *Whitgift* or Dr. *Oates* be to be believed, 'tis certain they contribute their endeavours to the bringing in of Popery, though they are not aware of it. The Bishop affirms [in his Letter to the Lord Treasurer, in *Fuller*,] *That to his certain knowledge, the Dissenters were animated to Nonconformity by the Jesuits.* And Dr. *Oates* in his Narrative, *Item* 1. *That the Rebellion in* Scotland *of the Presbyterians against the Episcopal Government, was contrived by the Jesuits*; Wright, Morgan, Ireland, *and others, being instructed to preach under the notion of Presbyterians, and to inform the* Scots *of the sad estate they were in by reason of Episcopal Tyranny exercised over them.* Item 11. *That the Jesuits in* Scotland *had stirr'd up the Presbyterians there to a Rebellion.* Item 43. tells us, *That Messengers were sent into* Scotland *with instructions to carry themselves like Nonconformists, and to preach to the disaffected* Scots *the necessity of taking up the Sword for the defence of Liberty of Conscience.* So that what the Jesuits did in *Scotland* in carrying on the Plot, was under the disguise of Nonconformists. And *Item* 73. *That there were eight thousand Catholicks ready to rise and joyn with the disaffected* Scots, *when required by the Scotch Jesuits so to do.* So *Item* 25. 51. *& passim*, Shewing, that though the Nonconformists mean no such thing, but are really irreconcilable Enemies to Popery, yet they as really are instrumental to Jesuits in bringing of it in; and it's evident that they are the avowed Enemies of the Protestant Religion as now *established by Law*, which the Popish Plotters do so oppose and hate. And Mr. *Baxter* himself saith, *That the Papists account that if the Puritans prevail, they shall make great advantage of it, their being unsetled and all in pieces, giving them footing for continual attempts; and that having their Party secretly among Puritans, is the way to be sure to maintain their interest.* Thus Mr. *Baxter*: Yet these Puritans are stiled, *The glory of the Churches, of the King and Kingdom, and such as no Prince in the world is equally blest with.* But I wish they deserved indeed the Character here given

Key of Catholicks.

given them; for I am ſure, that the more holy, wiſe, and able judicious they are, the more quiet and peaceable they will live, and the more obedient to their Governours; eſpecially at ſuch a time as this, when Diſobedience and Diviſion [that are always dangerous] do threaten moſt perniciouſly the Church and State: and therefore the turbulent and wrathful revilers of Miniſters and Government, the peeviſh, cenſorious, and falſe accuſers, are certainly none of theſe.

SECT. VII.

Nonconformiſts charging the Parliament with the burning of London.

AMong all the dirt thrown in the face of Authority, he hath no ſuch malicious fling as that at the Parliament, charging them with their making the *Oxford*-Act, as that horrid and crying ſin for which God inflicted that dreadful Judgment the *Burning of* London, *p.* 238. And that the Biſhops may be ſure to be taken notice of, he words it thus; *The Parliament and Biſhops:* as though the Biſhops were no part of the Parliament. And all this in the greateſt capital letters, to ſignifie the notoriety of it.

But were Mr. *Baxter* an unprejudiced and impartial, and not a paſſionate and ſpiteful interpreter of Providences, he might have thought of many other more crying ſins, as more probable procatarcticks to aſcribe that Judgment to. We want not ſins National [of ſo deep a tincture of Hell, and ſo complicated a ſinfulneſs as to contain in them the violation of all Laws Divine and Humane, the boldeſt tranſgreſſion of the plaineſt Rules of Duty, the down-right renouncing Chriſtianity it ſelf] to aſcribe ſuch Judgments to: As, 1. The Murder of the late King, a ſtain that like *Cain*'s brand, will ſtick by us as long as we are a Nation. What can we think of that Crime that doth at once (as one ſpeaks) hamſtring the State, and cut the pipes of Juſtice;

ſtice; wrap up all in a wilde Confuſion, and ruine whole Societies of men; murder the Father of the Country, Gods Vicegerent, and that in a formal way of Juſtice, thereby running Juſtice through as with her own Sword? and all this in open Rebellion, which is as the ſin of Witchcraft, 1 *Sam.* 15. 23. *i. e.* diabolical, and ſcarce ever repented of; not onely contrary to the Rules of Scripture and the Laws of Nature, but alſo contrary to many ſacred Oaths and Promiſes, the moſt ſolemn Obligations that can be faſtened on the Conſciences of men. Such a heinous crying ſin as this, is like enough to call for Vengeance, to bring a Curſe upon the Nation, and make the Land like an *Akeldama*, yea a *Maranatha*, ſcarce to be expiated without a total Exciſion and final Extirpation. Nor is the diſtance of time between the Sin and the Judgment, any thing to the contrary: for ſuch Crimſon-daring ſins are uſually puniſht at a diſtance. It was forty years after the murder of the holy Jeſus, ere the Vengeance threatned for it came upon the Jewiſh Nation. 2. Or it might have been more religiouſly aſcribed to what Mr. *Baxter* ſpeaks, *Of the Devils ſtigmatizing the Nation with the brand of* P E R, *and of the Lands mourning for Oaths* broken: Which is probable enough. But who are the Oath-breakers? they who renounce the Solemn League and Covenant, a thing which if 'twere binding, would make Rebellion and Perjury it ſelf matters of duty; or thoſe Miniſters in Forty three who ſent away their Congregations with full diſcharge from the bonds of the Oath of Allegiance to war againſt their King, by the Solemn League and Covenant, and after that the Engagement; a thing as contrary to the Covenant, as the Covenant was to their Oaths of Allegiance and Canonical Obedience; and after that their homaging to *Cromwel* in a way and manner almoſt as contrary to their Engagement, as that was to any of their former Oaths: ſo that they were ſhod round with Perjury, who now ſo ſtick at one Remove. Such was the compaſs of their religious ſwallow, all Oaths could down with them, but none could hold them. No marvel then (as Mr. *Baxter* ſaith) if for Oaths broken the Land mourns. And to aſcribe that direful Conflagration, the burning

of

of *London*, to ſuch crying ſins, were a far more religious interpretation of Gods Providence and Judgments, than to aſcribe it to an Act of Parliament that deſigned nothing but the good of the Kingdom, the peace and ſecurity of Church and State. To which I might adde, 3. The Bloud of thoſe many Chriſtians ſhed in the Civil War; all which the very Laws of the Land make Murder: For to kill any man in War, without Authority derived from him or them that have legal power to make War, is Murder. And that they who made the War had no Authority ſo to do, is evident from that 25 *Edw.* 3. c. 2. which makes it Treaſon to levy War againſt the King in his Realm, or to be adherent to the Kings Enemies in his Realm, giving them aid or comfort in the Realm or elſewhere. Many other National and crying ſins may be named, whereto we may aptly and piouſly aſcribe this dreadful Judgment, and not thus ſpitefully to an Act of Parliament deſigning nothing but the good of the Kingdom.

SECT. VIII.

Nonconformiſt Perſecution.

HIS Book doth abound with loud Outcries of *Perſecution, the loſs of their Maintenance, the ruine of their Eſtates and Health*, p. 234. He ſcatters up and down his *Plea* frequent complaints of *Goals, Starving, Ruine, Death, bloudy Perſecution*, &c. as though he were in any Turkiſh Slavery or Popiſh Inquiſition. And what doth all this tend to, but to enrage the People, and to bring an *Odium* on the Conforming Clergy? For Mr. *Baxter* tells us in his Preface to *Cath. Theolog. That godly people will follow their ſuffering Teachers, and that their ſufferings will ſtir up in the people a paſſionate Zeal, which will make the people pray for the downfal of that Clergie* [Prognoſt. p. 14.] *as the Enemies of God and Godlineſs; and that it will make ſome of the Nonconformiſts think* [p. 20.] *theſe paſſions of the people*

people needful to check the fierceneſs of the Afflicters, and therefore will let them alone. And ſome of the more injudicious and hot brained of the Nonconformiſts (as he ſtiles them) *will put the people on, and make them believe that all Communion with Conforming Miniſters or Pariſh Churches, is unlawful, and their forms of Worſhip ſinful and Antichriſtian; and that they are Temporizers, and betrayers of Purity, that communicate or aſſemble with them.* Theſe and the like effects, Mr. *Baxter* ſaith, the ſufferings of the Nonconforming Miniſters will have.

Who then will wonder at their noiſe of Perſecution, or queſtion their ugly meaning of crying out of it at ſuch a time as this, when they have the Liberty and Indulgence which not long ſince was all that they pretended to deſire; when the Penal Laws are like to be taken off, and a door of not onely Toleration, but Comprehenſion open; which (it is believed) will produce no other diſcovery than this, How fond they are of their [truly ſo called] beloved Separation, notwithſtanding all their clamours of Perſecution.

But how are they perſecuted? Why, 1. They vilifie and reproach their Governours at their pleaſure, who yet let them alone, and paſs it by *impunè*. 2. They have bound themſelves by a rebellious *Covenant*, to endeavour the extirpation of our Church-government; which they adhere to, and refuſe to renounce, notwithſtanding its complicated ſinfulneſs; and ſo declare themſelves to be ſuch Enemies to their Governours and Government, as want but opportunity and power to act (according to their League and Covenant) the Overthrow of it and them: for which reaſon their Governours knowing their Enmity to their Government, think them not fit to be truſted with places of Miniſterial Authority and Preferment, upon their own ſeditious and pernicious terms. And this is that the Pleader calls *Perſecution, the loſs of their Maintenance, the ruine of their Eſtates*, &c.

In the Primitive Church, when the Chriſtians dwelt among Heathens, there came a Maid from her Fathers houſe to one of the Heathen Tribunals, and without any Call to it, declared her

ſelf

ſelf a Chriſtian, ſpit in the Judges face, and ſo provoked him to cauſe her to be executed. Will any ſay this was to ſuffer Perſecution? So theſe third *Cato*'s of the Nonconformity load their Governours with Reproaches, calling them to their faces, Lordly, proud, and tyrannical Thorns and Thiſtles, the military Miniſters of the Devil, *&c.* For all this provocation, they are ſuffered to preach openly, and to be well paid privately, to act freely, and to enjoy plenteouſly all that they deſired [not long ſince] to enjoy. Few of them but have plentiful Maintenance; ſome, that beſide their Contribution of thirty or forty pounds *per Annum*, have lodged themſelves eruptly as Chaplains to Perſons of Quality; where they are attended and honoured like any Scotch ἀρχοντι, ſet at the Table by my Lady, when the poor Pariſh-Curate is ſet below the Candleſtick. I know in my Country here in *Worceſterſhire* about ten of them, and I believe the County hath not many more, moſt of which I am well aſſured hath more for his Maintenance than ever my ſelf had from the Church, who have lived a Miniſter of it almoſt theſe eight years: Yet theſe are thoſe querulous and diſcontented Creatures, thoſe poor gentle Lambs, that are ſtill bleating out Perſecution and Tyranny.

Had the Loyaliſts been but half ſo favourably uſed by Nonconformiſts, during the time of their Uſurpation and Tyranny, as Nonconformiſts are now by them, they would never have been ſo ungratefully querulous: 'Tis well known how they turned almoſt all out of their Livings, that adhered to their lawful Soveraign; ſent them with their Wives and Families a begging, who durſt not proſtitute their Conſciences with downright Perjury, and having ſworn Canonical Obedience, durſt not by a contrary Oath tranſgreſs at once the Laws of God, Nature, and Nations. They obtained that Order from a bloudy Uſurper, that every Epiſcopal Divine ſhould not onely be uncapable of a Benefice, but alſo to exerciſe any act of Miniſterial Function; nor yet be ſuffered to get ſome little ſubſiſtence by teaching School; no, nor at laſt to live in any Gentlemans houſe, who out of pity might take him in to keep him from

ſtarving. Whether this, or the preſent caſe of the Nonconformiſts, be more like Perſecution, let any but a Nonconformiſt judge. Read who will, the Principles and Practices of the Nonconformiſt Brethren in *Scotland*, and he ſhall find (as one obſerves) that where they have the Power, their little finger is heavier than the hand and loins of a Biſhop, or Epiſcopal Governour: The authority of their Courts Eccleſiaſtical was more tyrannically exerciſed over not onely the Bodies and Eſtates, but alſo the Souls and Conſciences of men, than ever was that of the Popiſh Inquiſition: *e. g. If after a little time granted for information, any refuſe to conform and ſubſcribe to their Confeſſion of Faith, their Rule of Government, their manner of Worſhip, he is forthwith excommunicate, yea though his diſſent from them be but in a Theological Tenet,* [which they frequently called Hereſie;] *after which Excommunication, upon the remonſtrance of a Commiſſioner from the Preſbytery to the Civil Judge, there is a Warrant from Supreme Authority given out to command him to conform, or within few days to be put to the Horn,* i. e. *to be outlawed: The tender Conſcience not conforming, the outlawed's Eſtate and Movables* [i. e. his Chattels] *becomes forfeited to the King: If within a year and a day he gives not Obedience and Conformity, his whole Revenues and Rents of immovable Goods are forfeited to the King during his life. Here the man is ſtript of all his Eſtate movable or immovable; yet this is not all, but ſtill upon Remonſtrance of the Preſbytery's Commiſſioner, another Letter goes out, which they call a Letter of Caption* [like that of our Writ *de Excommunicato capiendo*] *which is to ſecure his Perſon, and commit him to cloſe Priſon as a Rebel. If he ſkulk or hide himſelf, out goes a Writ called Letters of* Intercommuning, *which forbids all the Kings Subjects to commune or confer with him perſonally or by Letter, upon pain of being accounted a Rebel of the ſame guilt. And if the Church requires all this of the Civil Magiſtrate* [for ſo they call the Soveraignty] *he is bound to obey them.*

Preſbytery diſplay'd, p. 39.

Now ſay who will if this be not in many reſpects as bad as the Popiſh Inquiſition, when a man ſhall be brought to all this for

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Nonconformity, though but in a Theological Tenet. What are our Penal Laws on peeviſh Diſſenters, compared with ſuch Preſbyterian Tyranny? We deſire them but to renounce a perjurious Combination, called [*Solemn League and Covenant*,] an Oath taken contradictory to a former; which if it binde the Conſcience, a man may be bound in Conſcience to ſteal, rebel, murder, or any thing; he has no more to do but ſwear, and he is bound in Conſcience to do it: an Oath which ſome Nonconformiſts have called a very Neſt of Villany, and ſuch (ſaid one of them) that no perſon or people fearing God ever took. We deſire them but to ſubſcribe and conform to ſuch Church-Diſcipline and Order as many of themſelves have acquitted from all intrinſick ſinfulneſs, and (I think I may adde) ſuch as onely can comport with the preſent Government of State. In caſe of Nonconformity hereto, the penalty is, to ſome advantageous, to all eaſie and tolerable. And what's this to Scotch Church-tyranny over Soul, Body, and Eſtate, for diſſenting but in a Theological Tenet, which the Preſbyterian Miniſters would have had brought into *England*; or to that Cruelty which they exerciſed on the Loyaliſts when in their uſurpt power?

But to end this, let me beſpeak the Nonconformiſts in the words of the Independents to the Preſbyterians, in a thing printed 1648, called [*The Pulpit-Incendiary*] directed againſt Mr. *Calamy*, *Caſe*, *Cranford*, and others, *p.* 45. the words are theſe: *You complain of your miſery and bondage, ſorrows and oppreſſions, and troubles of the Church*; [*i.e.* the Preſbyterian Church] *What ails you? what troubles you? who oppreſſes you? where is the leaſt ſhew of oppreſſion, or cauſe of complaint miniſter'd to you, except it be becauſe you are not ſuffer'd to oppreſs your Brethren? Can you feed upon nothing but Bloud, yea, the bloud of your Brethren, that though you have every thing elſe, you ſo complain of ſorrow and oppreſſion? Is this your ſorrow and oppreſſion, that you cannot oppreſs?* Thus the Independent to the Preſbyterian, *i.e.* Nonconformiſts to one another in 48. And 'tis even ſo with Nonconformiſts ſtill. This is their Perſecution, that they cannot perſecute; this is their Suf-

fering, that they are not ſuffer'd to domineer: So certain it is, that nothing but governing will ſatisfie them, let them pretend what they will.

SECT. IX.

Nonconformiſt Loyalty.

HIS ſeventh *Sect.* from *p.* 120. to *p.* 140. gives in a Liſt of ſome few harmleſs Tranſactions relating to the late Civil War, whereby he would betray his Reader into an opinion of Nonconformiſts innocence, *And that they were no promoters of the Civil War, nor had any hand in the Kings death, inſinuating that they wrote and preacht againſt it*; (p. 130, 132.) *that they were of thoſe that reſtored the King.* Nor do they ſtick to tell the world, *That no people in the world have better principles of Loyalty and Obedience than they.* Thus will they tell the Sun 'tis midnight, and yet be believed by their credulous Followers. But this hath had its full confutation by the Impleader, who hath made their guilt evidently to appear as much notorious to be denied, as it is impious to be defended: and therefore I ſhould paſs it by. But ſeeing, 1. that notwithſtanding all that can be ſaid, the belief of their innocence in this matter gets ground daily; and 2. that their *Pleas for Peace*, *Way of Concord*, *Melius Inquirendums*, &c. are of the ſame tendency as thoſe Paper-ſcuffles that began the Civil War: Seeing theſe things, I think he doth a good office who at any time endeavours the undeceiving of Poſterity in ſuch a matter as this is, and gives the world what warning he can of thoſe Wolves in Sheeps-cloathing, that ſo worried Church and State into their wild and ruinating confuſions; though he do no more but make more publick what is publiſhed already of thoſe ſeditious Invectives againſt the King, and Incitements to Rebellion, which the Nonconformiſts Pulpits flamed with, venting not onely from Pulpit but Preſs, their rebellious Doctrines as religious Maximes, like Razors ſet with

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oyl (ſaid one) to cut the throat of Majeſty with their ſmooth keenneſs.

I begin with Mr. *Baxter*, H. Commonw. *Theſ.* 358. compar'd with 368. *If the King* (ſays he) *raiſe war againſt the Parliament, upon their declaration of the dangers of the Commonwealth------in that caſe the King may not onely be reſiſted* [i. e. fought againſt, kill'd] *but he ceaſeth to be King.* Yet ſpeaking of the Governours then in being, who by Rebellion and Perjury had uſurpt Supremacy, *Pref. to H. Commonw.* he ſaith, *They were the beſt Governours in the world, and ſuch as Subjects are forbid to depoſe, on pain of damnation.* In his *Preface to H. Commonw.* p. 23. he ſpeaks it like a Challenge to the whole world, *That if any man can prove that the King was the higheſt Power in the time of thoſe Diviſions, and that he had power to make that War which he made, he will offer his head* [he means, his neck] *to Juſtice as a Rebel.* [So that every one taking the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy Mr. *Baxter* condemns for Perjury.] He tells us in *H. Commonw.* p. 486. *That he having often ſearched his own heart whether he did lawfully engage in the War or not, and encourage ſo many thouſands to it, that the iſſue of all his ſearch was this-----That he cannot ſee that he was miſtaken in the main, nor dares he repent of it, nor forbear doing the ſame, if it were to do again in the ſame ſtate of things.* He ſays indeed in the ſame place, *That if he could be convinced that he had ſinn'd in that matter, he would as gladly make publick recantation, as he would eat or drink*; which he never did yet: And therefore is ſtill of the ſame mind, and would on the ſame occaſion do the ſame things, *i. e.* fight and encourage ſo many thouſands to fight againſt the King.

Though St. *Peter* ſaith, the King is Supream.

Mr. *Calamy*, in a Sermon before the Houſe of Lords, on *Chriſtmas*-day, 1644. p. 29. *That 'tis commendable to fight for Peace and Reformation againſt the Kings commands*: p. 9. *And that all that fought under the Kings Banner againſt the Parliament, fought themſelves into ſlavery, and did endeavour by all bloudy means to ſubvert Religion and Liberty*: p. 12. *And that the*

the King that ſhould have been a Head of Gold, was an Iron Head to cruſh his own body in pieces: p. 18. *That thoſe that made their peace with the King at* Oxford, *were the* Judas's *of* England; *and it were juſt with God to give them their portions with* Judas: p. 13. *That thoſe that engaged in this Cauſe* [*i.e.* the War againſt the King] *and the Covenant, were unjuſtly charged with Rebellion:* p. 38. *That it was Gods Cauſe, and it ſhould at laſt prevail.* And in his Speech at *Guild-hall*, Oct. 6. 1643. *That this Cauſe was every way ſo juſt and good, that if he had as many lives as he hath hairs of his head, he would be willing to ſacrifice them all in that Cauſe, i. e.* the War againſt the King.

So Mr. *Caſe*, in his Sermon before the Houſe of Commons, on *Ezek.* 20. 25. Epiſt. Dedic. *Ye* [*i.e.* the Parliament] *have overcome the Lion and the Bear, why may ye not overcome this uncircumciſed Philiſtine, who hath not ceaſed to blaſpheme the Armies of the living God? Behold* HE *lies groveling at your feet! what doth there remain but* CUTTING OFF HIS HEAD? And in his Sermon on *Ezra* 10. 2. *How hath the preaching of Chriſt ſcorched thoſe Cathedral Prieſts, the unhallowed Generation of Scribes and Phariſees, and perfected their Rebellion into that unpardonable ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt?* Mr. *Caſe* on *Dan.* 11. 32. before the Houſe of Commons, *Curſed be he that holdeth his Sword from Bloud, that ſpares when the Lord ſays ſtrike*, p. 24. *that ſuffers thoſe to eſcape whom God hath appointed to deſtruction.* In a Sermon on *Iſai.* 43. 4. *What a ſad thing is it (my Brethren) to ſee our King in the head of an Army of* Babylonians, *refuſing to be called the King of* England, Scotland, *and* Ireland, *and chuſing rather to be called the King of* Babylon! Again, p. 18. *Prelacy and Prelatick Clergie, Prieſts and Jeſuits, Ceremonies and Service-book, were mighty Impediments in the way of Reformation, and God hath mightily pull'd them down.* Preaching to a Court-Martial on 2 *Chron.* 19. 6. *You know* (ſays he) *how the* Midianites [*i.e.* the King and his Party] *with whom you have to do, have vext you with their Wiles, and laboured to obſtruct and cut us all off in our paſſage to the Land of Promiſe; that bleſſed Reformation which the Parliament conſult for,*

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Assemblies dispute for, Armies fight for, and all good Christians pray for; therefore do you honour God in avenging your Brethren on those Midianites, *in doing execution on those Enemies of Christ and the Kingdom.* And in his Book of the Covenant, delivered in three Sermons, *He that hath been a Malignant or Neutral, let him be so no more; for I protest against every man that after his striking this solemn Covenant with God, shall dare to persist in any of these mentioned Abominations;* [*i. e.* adhering to the King, Ceremonies, *&c.*] *he is an Enemy to Christ, a Traytor to the Kingdom, a State-murderer, a destroyer of himself and his Posterity,* &c.

Mr. *Herle* in his Sermon before the House of Commons, on 1 *King.* 22. 22. p.28. *If the Devil can but get a Prophet to leave Gods service for the Kings, he hath taken a Blue already, and is ready for as deep a Black as Hell can give him.*

There may be produced many thousand instances of the like, shewing how active they were in, and how far contributing to, the late Civil War, and consequently the Murder of the King. And thus they whose first Institution made them Messengers of glad tidings between God and his People, have made themselves Heraulds to denounce war between Gods Vicegerent and his Subjects; and that not onely by casting a slur upon the King, and representing him as unworthy to be King, but by clamouring against Bishops and Ceremonies, as the blinde brood of Antichrist, Popish trash and trumpery, *&c.* Which same method is just now reviving; I pray God prevent the same sad consequents and effects. But notwithstanding all this, they still out-face the Sun, and say, [as the Pleader doth] That they preacht and wrote against the War and Regicidie, and that they were of those who restored the King: But alas, when?

Mr. *Blair*, Mr. *Jenkins.*

--------*Galeatos serò duelli, pœnituit.*

When the Independents had rode them like fools, they were

glad to part Stakes. 'Tis certain theſe Preſbyterians never attempted the Kings reſtoring, till they were viſibly in the very jaws of the Phanaticks, that would ſuffer them to domineer no longer; but were then ſeizing on their Tithes and Churches, the laſt morſel of their Spiritual Revenues: So that (as one ſaid) if the Tithe-pig had not cry'd louder in their ears than either their Conſcience or the Word of God, they had not been awakened to attempt it.

Mr. *Baxter* objects, That it was not the Preſbyterian, but a rude conquering Army that put the King to death. *Anſw.* A rude conquering Army were the immediate Agents, but who impower'd them to do it? thoſe Under-parties and inferiour Sects. How broke they in upon us, but at the Schiſm and breach that Preſbyterians firſt made? This point of Nonconformiſts guilt, as to the promoting of the War and the Kings death, may be cleared from other Topicks, as the Covenant, *&c.* But *hanc movere nolo Camerinam.*

In aſſerting Nonconformiſt Loyalty, Mr. *Baxter* proceeds to tell us, *p.*30. *That Princes and Rulers may forbid---all that preach Rebellion or Sedition, that propagate ſuch wicked Doctrine, and that they may puniſh them that do it:* p. 247. *And that they ſhall never be againſt making the ſtricteſt Laws to puniſh Nonconformiſts that ſhall be proved guilty of Sedition or diſloyalty,* &c. *Anſw.* Not to call Nonconformiſts diſloyal or ſeditious, I leave to the Readers judgment theſe things following; which Mr. *Baxter* in his firſt Plea ſpeaks not as his own onely, but as the ſentiment of his whole Party. He teaches, *p.*226. *That Paſtors preached againſt the will of Princes for three hundred years, and after that againſt the will of Chriſtian Princes.* And *p.* 26. *That God hath wrought Miracles to juſtifie thoſe that would not ceaſe preaching, when Princes, yea Chriſtian Princes have forbid them: Particularly the Biſhops of* Africa, *who for preaching when the King forbad them, had their tongues cut out by the Kings command, and yet ſpake freely after their tongues were cut out.* Where though he call them Chriſtian Princes, yet all that he alledges for it, proves no ſuch thing, but that thoſe Princes were

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all *Arrians*, or uſurping Conquerours. Is this diſloyal and ſeditious or not, to argue the duty of Nonconformiſts preaching in diſobedience to Chriſtian Princes, and in ſpite of their Laws, from Miniſters diſobeying ſuch Uſurpers and *Arrians* as he inſtances in *Valens*, *Conſtantius*, &c. that becauſe *Athanaſius*, *Baſil*, and *Miletius* preached notwithſtanding the prohibition of Arrian Princes, that therefore Nonconformiſts of *England* muſt, notwithſtanding the Interdict of the King? What doth this argue, unleſs the King and Clergy of *England* were Uſurpers that had not the power of forbidding them to preach, or *Arrians* that would not ſuffer any Miniſters to preach Chriſt? Again he tells us, *p.* 225. *That Papal Uſurpations, and impoſing of things unneceſſary as neceſſary to Union and Communion, hath been the great cauſe of Schiſms throughout the Chriſtian world for this thouſand years.* *And* p. 226. *that they who ſtill obey ſuch* dividing Impoſers, *do continue Schiſms in the Church by encouraging the cauſes of them.* Where by [dividing Impoſers] we muſt underſtand the King, Parliament, and Clergy of *England*; for who elſe can he pretend to ſay impoſes upon them? And if no body impoſeth on them, why doth he clamour and complain of dividing Impoſers? What mean thoſe black Characters he gives the conforming Clergy of *England*, of deliberately perjured perſons, and a hundred the like? What People fearing God would not abhor ſuch a Miniſtry, and in ſpite of all lawful Authority, fight and die, do and ſuffer any thing, rather than hazard their Souls in truſting them to the care and conduct of ſuch Miniſters? Interpret who will, his meaning, in ſuggeſting it as the opinion of ſome Caſuiſts, *That Humane Laws bind not, when they are not for the common good*, [of which good the people muſt be judge;] Adding, *That he had rather ſay, When they are notoriouſly againſt the Laws of Chriſt, and the common good*; intimating the Laws of *England* to be ſuch: for what Laws elſe are they concern'd with? Had Mr. *Baxter* a mind to preach Sedition, what would he ſay more? None that deſigns Sedition, will teach it openly and *in terminis*; that will not take: It muſt be done inſinuatingly and diſguiſedly, as &c.

Yet Mr. *Baxter*, in the name of the rest of the Nonconformists, would have Princes forbid and punish all that propagate seditious and disloyal Doctrine; and would have the strictest Laws made to punish any Nonconformists that shall be proved guilty of Sedition or Disloyalty.

SECT. X.

Kneeling.

ANother Scruple of the Pleaders which the Impleader hath past by, is kneeling at the Sacrament: And of all the ugly Pimples that flush in the face of Nonconformist Churches, there's none looks worse than this, upon the account of that great breach that of it self it makes in Church-Communion; the Word and Sacrament being the two principal materials of Church-Communion. And for this he urges nothing but the old Cant, in four particulars.

First, Sitting being the Table-gesture, *Sitting as men do at Meat* (saith he, *p.* 150.) *is certainly lawful.*

Answ. As though the Lords Supper were a common Feast, and the administration of it to be guided by the Rules of common Table-fellowship; and if so, why do not Dissenters receive it with their Hats on? for that is as correspondent to the ordinary Table-gesture as sitting is.

Secondly, He urges the Example of Christ. Whereas,

1. 'Tis not certain what gesture Christ used: All that we read of it is, that he did eat the Passover with his Disciples in a triclinary gesture, which we now express by sitting: Whereas,

Luke 22. 14, 15, 20. John 21. 20.

1. It was the ordinary custom of the Jews to change their gesture, even during the Passover it self; whereas the Sacrament was μετα το δειπνησαι, says the Text, *Luke* 22. 20. Beside, 'tis nowhere said, that Christ and his Disciples continued in the Table gesture at the blessing of the Holy Supper.

Buxt. Syn. Judaic. cap. 13.

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2. There's the same reason for our imitation of Christ in one circumstance as well as another; and so if we must imitate Christ at the Sacrament in Gesture, why not in Time and Place also? and so as Christ did in an upper-room after Supper, *&c.* But,

3. If we must imitate Christ's practice herein, we must receive it kneeling, *i. e.* in conformity to the custom of the Church where we live; so did Christ and his Apostles; they received the Passover in that Gesture which was then in use in the Jewish Church.

Thirdly, A third thing he urges against kneeling [which I believe is as much against his own knowledge] is the custom of the Church Catholick, and the Canons of general Councils, particularly *Nice*, 1 *Can.* 20. that prohibiteth Adoration on any Lords-day in the year.

Answ. Though Mr. *Baxter* alledge this to amuse his Followers, yet he knows,

1. That that same Council which forbad Genuflexion, did require standing, and not sitting. And,

2. That that injunction of the Church was onely to signifie their belief and joy concerning their own and Christ's Resurrection, and not to continue in the Church after the Resurrection was sufficiently believed; for if it were still binding, we must receive the Sacrament standing, and not sitting or kneeling. But,

3. Admit that the Primitive Christians did receive the Sacrament kneeling [which they did not] yet that would not prove kneeling unlawful upon this account, because the Church is not bound to observe always the same indifferent Rites and Gestures: for though Christ and his Apostles sate when they taught the people, *Act.* 16. 13. yet all Ministers are not bound thereby to the same Gesture.

Fourthly, A fourth scruple he has against kneeling, is its symbolizing scandalously with idolatrous Papists, who signifie thereby Bread-worship or Iddolatry.

Answ. This same Argument is as good against sitting; for that is as much a symbolizing with *Papists*, *Arrians*, and *Heathens*.

Durand. rat. l. 4. Alt. Dam. c. 10.

1. *Papists.* The Pope himself, at some Solemnities, receives the Eucharist sitting. And the Benedictine Monks the Thursday before *Easter*, receive it sitting.

2. Sitting is a symbolizing with *Arrians.* The *Arrians* in *Poland* denying the Divinity of Christ, were the first Authors, known to those Churches, of this sitting gesture. *Syn. Craco.*

3. 'Tis a symbolizing with *Pagans.* Sitting was the ordinary gesture of Worship in the Romish Pagan Idolatry. *Plutarch* affirms, That the ancient Laws of their Pagan-worship required *ut adoraturi sedeant*, that they worship sitting. Now if symbolizing with Papists be a sufficient Argument against kneeling, why is not symbolizing with Papists, Arrians, and Heathens, a good Argument against sitting; and so Christ's institution of the Sacrament made void by admitting no gesture to be lawful? Yet by this superstitious fear of sin in kneeling, do they break Communion with us, and scare many wholly from the Sacrament in publick and private both; like that good Physician, that out of tenderness to his Patient, lest he should hurt himself by drinking, stole his silver Cup. 'Tis enough to shew, that this scruple [like the rest] doth not arise from any tenderness of Conscience, but peevishness and obstinacy; that the Church of *England* hath so openly and plainly declared against all adoration of the Sacramental Bread and Wine, or any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and bloud therein. And is it not shameful obstinacy when men shall be so tempted to contemn that sacred Ordinance which the Primitive Christians so begg'd upon their knees! that it shoul'd so superstitiously be made the cause of Strife and Division, which was intended to unite us in love to one another! That men should chuse to go to Goal rather than to the Lords Table, for fear of kneeling, and all upon such feeble pretences as the best that the learned Pleader could produce! This scruple hath been so oft, so fully, and so convincingly confuted, that Mr. *Baxter* (in his Book against *Bagshaw*) tells us, That the Nonconformists

Rubrick after the Communion.

miſts of *London*, upon conſult in this matter, did generally determine to receive the Sacrament of the Pariſh-Miniſter [and kneeling.] Which ſhews that they are convinced of the lawfulneſs of it, and do act in this matter contrary to a known duty, meerly to keep up the Separation. And in his fifth *Diſput. p.* 411. That himſelf would kneel rather than diſturb the Churches peace; intimating that himſelf doth not believe it to be ſinful, though he would have his Followers to believe ſo. I know one or more Nonconformiſts of the greateſt note in *Worceſterſhire*, who having acknowledged the lawfulneſs of kneeling, ingenuouſly declared, that they refuſed Communion with their Pariſh-Miniſter, and gave the Sacrament in houſes, meerly in compliance with the people, and for fear of loſing them; (as much as to ſay) For fear leſt their Faction ſhould return to Union and Church-Communion, and (as Mr. *Zach. Croſton* ſaid) ſerve God and do their duty, leaving their Leaders to their diſſembling tricks.

The reſt of his Exceptions are for the moſt part ſuch as do vaniſh in the very naming of them: As,

1. *That every Pariſhioner ſhould receive the Sacrament twice a year.* As though every Child or Ideot were thereby obliged to it, or as though the Church meant any but perſons duly qualified; though the *greateſt Nonconformiſts in Queen *Elizabeth*'s time, and the †greateſt in King *James*'s time, ſeemed to think three times a year too little, and therefore would have all who were in the Churches Communion, forc'd to receive *Statis temporibus omnes adigendi*, ſaid the latter; forc'd by civil puniſhment, ſaid the former.

* Mr. *Cartwright.*
† *Alt. Dam.*

2. *That all Prieſts and Deacons are to ſay dayly the Morning and Evening-prayer privately or openly, not being let by ſickneſs or ſome other urgent cauſe.* Where is the Exception? or what is the evil of praying when they can awhile? for the injunction intends no more.

3. *He excepts againſt the uſe of Godfathers and Godmothers*; though himſelf [in *Scripture-proof of Infants Baptiſm*, page preliminary to his Epiſt. Dedicatory] hath proved ſufficiently, that

that the use of Godfathers and Godmothers is, if not Apostolical, yet of greatest antiquity in the Church, it being used in *Hyginus*'s time, who lived (as he proves from *Helvicus*, *Paræus*, *Prideaux*, and others] within fourty years of St. *John*, and convers'd with the Disciples and Familiars of the Apostles; and so (as he urgeth) cannot be ignorant of the practice of the Apostles in baptizing Infants. So that (according to Mr. *Baxter* himself) it's probable enough that the use of Godfathers and Godmothers is Apostolical. However, that it is of greatest antiquity in the Church, himself hath proved, beyond the reach of scruple; nor are any other of his scruples much less futile. Is it not a shame then for those Dissenters to make such pitiful Pleas for Peace and Nonconformity, to disturb the Churches Peace, and endanger the Safety of the Kingdom, on such frivolous pretences and scruples, no more rational or religious than that of their Brethren in *Scotland*, who once scrupled the lawfulness of sending sealed Letters into *Spain*, lest the Wax should be employed in making Tapers to the Virgin *Mary* or other Saints, and so they should be accessory to Idolatry; or than that of a *Worcestershire*-Nonconformist, who kill'd his Fathers Greyhound [contrary to his Interdict and Intreaty] because it was (said he) a profane creature.

SECT. XI.

Now upon a due disquisition of these things, judge who will of these Queries *following.*

Q. 1. WHether that which Mr. *Baxter* saith of Conformity, be not much more true of Nonconformity (*viz.*) That there is more in Mr. *Tombs* for Anabaptistry, in the late *Hungarian* for Polygamy, in others for Drunkenness, stealing and lying in cases of necessity, than ever hath been published yet for the lawfulness of Nonconformity?

Q. 2. Whe-

Q. 2. Whether the preſent ſad Separation be not kept up chiefly by this Cheat *(viz.)* the Peoples ſuppoſing Nonconformiſts to know Communion with our Church to be unlawful and ſinful? whereas they do believe and know the contrary; and accordingly [ſome of the learnedeſt of them] have declared publickly the innocence and lawfulneſs of our Church-Communion, Liturgy, and Ceremonies, *&c.* who yet could never be brought to ſay one word to the people of this their belief.

Q. 3. Whether Mr. *Baxter*'s taking up with ſuch frivolous Exceptions, and being guilty of ſo many groſs and palpable ſelf-contradictions in defending Nonconformity, be not ſome proof that he writes what he doth not believe, and deſignes nothing in his Writings but to amuſe the people and ſupport the Separation? and whether he could with all his Learning have deviſed any thing more, whereby to perpetuate a rigid Separation?

Q. 4. Whether their being ſo ſtudious of new Scruples, and ſo buſie at reviling Governours and Government, at ſuch a time as this, when Indulgences to them abound, when their Intereſt gets ground, when they enjoy all that liberty that once they did pretend to deſire, when there are attempts of opening the doors of Toleration and Comprehenſion to them, and when the attempters have been ſo ſcurrilouſly reproacht, and ſo abuſively requited for it, as that excellent perſon Dr. *Stillingfleet* and others have been: Whether this be not ſome ſigne that they affect Nonconformity, and are fond of their Separation, and to be ſatisfied with nothing but governing; and that it is not Conſcience, [as King *James* ſaid at *Hampton-Court*] but Contumacy that keeps them from conforming?

Q. 5. Whether their refuſing to renounce the Covenant, which Mr. *Alſop* calls the great Mountain in their way to Conformity; whether this doth not import their belief of the obligation of that diabolical Sacrament, and ſo that they look upon themſelves as bound thereby to endeavour the alteration of the Government, as ſoon as they can ſtrengthen their Party, and get

power

power and opportunity so to do? And whether the Government had not need to have a very watchful eye over such as so look upon themselves as obliged to endeavour all they can its overthrow, who have sworn, and stand to their Oath, expresly thus never to give themselves to Neutrality or Indifferency in extirpating the Government, [as 'tis now by Law establish'd] but will zealously and constantly continue their endeavours all the days of their lives, to extirpate the Church-government by Bishops, *&c.* That they will do this against all opposition, against all lets and impediments whatever, as the words of the Oath are.

Q. 6. Whether the Nonconformists would endure in the Kingdom a Party so combined against them, as they are against the present Government, had they the power that once they had?

Q. 7. Whether the like out-cries against Bishops and Ceremonies, the like Paper-scuffles as these Pleas for Peace, were not the immediate fore-runner, and much of the cause of the late Civil War?

Q. 8. Whether all those convulsive State-troubles we are in, all those Fears and Jealousies of Popery that the Nation groans under, be not truly and rightly ascribed to those Abettors of Nonconformist-principles, who banished the D. of *Y.* thither where he was seduced to the Church of *Rome*?

Q. 9. Whether that tenderness of Conscience and purity of Religion which Nonconformists so pretend to, can consist with that schismatical disturbance of the Churches Peace, that despising Dominion, and speaking evil of Dignities, that vilifying of Ministers, and disobeying of Magistrates, which Nonconformists are so notoriously guilty of, and which are as contrary to the Word of God, as Mr. *Tombs*'s Anabaptistry, the *Hungarian*'s Polygamy, lying, stealing, drunkenness, *&c.*

Q. 10. Whether these Nonconformity-scruples can in the judgment of right Reason or Religion, countervail one of those many evils of those divisions of Church and State, which they occasion? Such are,

1. That

1. That want of Christian love and tenderness of affection which Christ so much enforceth upon his Church and People, much unchristian censoriousness, and rash judging one another, that πικρὸν ζῆλον, that bitter envying and strife, which St. *James* so condemns as carnal, sensual, devilish, *Jam.* 3. 14, 15. By all which God is certainly offended, Christian Charity much violated, the Churches Peace disturbed, its Enemies most gratified, Christianity it self reproached, Irreligion and Ungodliness encouraged. *Constantine* observed, That the separation of the *Donatists* made those that least zeal'd Religion, to deride and scoff at it. *Optatus* notes, That whilst the *Donatists* made a breach in the Church about matters of Discipline, and contended that their Separation was lawful, and the Orthodox Church decry'd it as unlawful, the common people were at a stand about the practice of Religion, *inter vestrum licet, & nostrum non licet, nutant & remigrant animæ populorum:* And one way in particular, whereby it is very apt to promote Profaneness and Irreligion, is by rendering Church-censures, and particularly Excommunication, ineffectual on Offenders. What care they for being excluded the Society of Christians, as long as so many reputed religious, do upon the very account of Religion voluntarily exclude themselves?

Eusebius Eccl. Hist. *l.* 10.

2. The endangering the Safety and Interest of the Kingdom: Church-divisions have brought most dreadful Ruines on Kingdoms and Countries. He that reads the History of the Turks and Eastern Empire, shall find that the Christians State-divisions which were founded on their Church-divisions, lay'd the foundation whereon the Turks erected their Dominions in those places; which was the rooting out of their publick Christian Profession. And *Josephus* relates, That the Divisions of *Jerusalem* and the Jewish Nation, exposed them to the desolation brought upon them by the *Romans*. Such is the evil of Church-divisions, that *Dion. Alex.* said, That to suffer Martyrdom, ὑπὲρ τῦ μὴ σχίσαι, rather than to divide the Church by Schisms, is not less glorious than to be a Martyr for refusing to offer Sacrifice to Idols.

Prol. de Bel. Jud.

Euseb. Hist. Eccl. *l.* 6.

3. A third evil of the present Church-divisions is, the declining of the regular and publick exercise of their Ministerial Functions, which the ancient Christians shew'd such dislike of, that if any Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon, being ordained, did not undertake his Ministration, he was to be separated from all Christian Society, and to be condemned with the same severity as he who undertook the place and minded it not: which regular and publick Ministration no Nonconformist can in Reason or Religion pretend to, so long as it is in such manifest contempt of lawful Authority as the Holy Scriptures condemn for heinous sin; much less can they pretend to it, that have wholly laid aside their Ministration or Exercise of their Ministry, as is the case of many Nonconformists that I could name.

Con. Ant. c. 17.

Were the Pleader employed in this matter (I doubt not) he would produce an Induction of a hundred such particulars, shewing the great evil and sinfulness, the pernicious duct and tendency of the present Separation. Yet this beloved Separation must be kept up, though on no other grounds than that on which the late Civil War was raised, (*viz.*) pretence to Reformation and purity of Religion; like the Papists Oath of Secrecy for carrying on the present Plot, which though every word of it almost be Blasphemy or Treason, yet is called a good and pious Designe. Whereas if they had the liberty of reforming, what were the Reformation but meer Tinkery, mending one hole and making two? as it was with them in Queen *Elizabeth*'s time; there were four Classes that had set up themselves in this Kingdom, who addrest themselves to the Lord *Burleigh* for alteration of the Liturgy; they had granted them the liberty of reforming, and making a new one, somewhat according to the *Geneva*-form; but this the second Classis disliked, and altered in 600 particulars. That again had the fate to be quarrel'd at by the third Classis, and almost as many faults found with it as the first; and the third was in like manner quarrell'd at by the fourth. So that at last the dissenting of those Brethren,

Bolron's Narrative.

Dr. *Hay*, view of the Direct. *p.* 2.

thren, like the division of Tongues at *Babel*, kept the Tower from advancing any higher.

I would now conclude with my humble request to Mr. *Baxter*, That he would forbear any further vilifying of Ministers, railing at Bishops, and scribling against Ceremonies, *&c.* as that which hath contributed very far to the great danger we are in of ruine both to Church and Kingdom: But I know 'tis as good forbid his Beard to grow. I shall end therefore as I began, with reminding him of his own words in *Saints Rest*, Epist. Dedic. to the People of *Kedarminster*, p. 8, 9. *If I should zealously press my Judgment on others, and seek to make a Party for it,* [as he hath done] *and disturb the Peace of the Church, and separate from my Brethren,* [as he doth] *I should fear lest I should prove a Fire-brand in Hell,* [which God forbid] *for being such a Fire-brand in the Church* [as he is.] *I charge you therefore if God should give me up to any factious Church rending course,* [as he hath] *that you follow me not a step,* [as you do.] Amen, Amen.

FINIS.

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